any nexus between the railway officials and the railway police and the travel agents. This is the point which I want to convey. I hope the hon. Railway Minister will look into this and take the necessary steps. Thank you.

Concession granted by Gujarat Government to Kankai Temple Trust in Sasao Gir

SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR (Maharashtra): Madam Deputy Chairman, Sasangir—it is popularly known as Gir forests—situated in Gujarat is the habitat and the last refuge, not only in India but also in Asia, of the majestic Asiatic lion. There are various types of flora, fauna and animals. There are beautiful birds like our national bird, peacock. It is a paradise for birds. This paradise is about to be lost. The Gujarat Government in total contravention of rule 2, sub-rule (2) of the Forest Conservation Act has granted permission for the conversion of the forest for non-forest purposes. It has violated the Wildlife Protection Act. As in the case of all Sanctuaries, entry to this sanctuary is prohibited during night time because most of the animals are nocturnal and their life starts at night. They get their sustenance only at night. The Gujarat Government has issued 50 or 100 passes to a trust called "Kankai Trust" based in Mumbai. These passes allow them to carry vehicles along with their members, say, 50 or 100—the number doesn't make any difference—inside the sanctuary at any time of the day or night. It also allows the vehicles of contractors to ply through it. If the vehicles are allowed to be plied after 8 P.M. and before 6 A.M. the next morning, which is the time of the activities of the predatory animals, the entire habitat of the lions is likely to be lost. This is in contravention not only of the Forests Conservation Act but also of the Wildlife Protection Act.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is the Wildlife Protection Act not applicable to Gujarat? How can they do it? It is applicable all over India. Then how are they doing it?

SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR: Madam, that is the anguish that I want to convey, through you, to the Government.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA (Bihar); They are violating the law.

SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR: Madam, they are violating the law. They are violating both the Acts, Section 2 as well as forests guidelines which were enunciated in 1988. Once these passes are given, anybody can go inside under the pretext of visiting the Kankai Temple, whether in the morning or in the evening or in the late night and can remain there. Madam, I had a good fortune of going to Gir forests. It is a beautiful forest. Asiatic lions are available only in Gir Forests and nowhere else in Asia. There are definite paths or routes by which you can travel by official cars—you cannot lake a private car—and go wherever you like. You cannot go off the routes which are prescribed. Now these people will be able to do it. This is a matter of concern because cheetahs became extinct in India in 1948. They tried to breed cheetahs in captivity by importing them from Africa. This effort failed and in 19% the last cheetah died. I had the privilege of visiting the tiger forest—we call it Ranthambor—and I travelled in this area for 18 hours—six hours a day. I did not see even a tail of tiger. This is the plight we are facing. Unless something is done immediately, the Asiatic lion population will be extinct like that of cheetah. Madam, through your benevolent indulgence, I would urge upon the Ministry concerned to take immediate action to stop issuance of passes and prevent gross violation of rules that is taking place. Once it takes place, they will resist to go back. There is a religious aspect in it because there is a temple. I am a Hindu. I believe in temples. But I don't believe in this type of gross violation of an Act which is of national interest. Fortunately, another environmentalist is present here. I am confident that she will be able to

impress upon her colleagues to take immediate action. Madam, I request the Government to do the needful.

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम(उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभापति महोदया , अभी इस सप्ताह में हम पर्यावरण औऱ वन मंत्रालय पर चर्चा करने वाले हैं, हम सब लोग जानते हैं, कि शासनगीर एशिया का सब से बड़ा जंगल जिसमें करीब 400 शेर हैं दुनिया में कहीं नहीं हैं। जिस तरह से पर्यावरण दूषित हो रहा है औऱ उसको भंग किया जा रहा है अगर यह चलता रहा तो फिर बहुत बुरा असर पर्यावरण पर वन पर पड़ने वाला है। मैं शिरोडकर जी के वक्तव्य से अपने आप को संबद्व करता हूं और आपके माध्यम से सरकार से प्रार्थाना करता हूं कि इसमें मदाखलत करके इसको रोका जाए।

SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT (Gujarat): Madam, 1 have visited Gir forests more than six times. Whenever I went there I saw more and more jungle-cutting. They have started a State transr port bus service — Shrimati Maneka Gandhi may note it — throughout the night. There are instances which were even reported in the Press that buses dashed against animals and animals were injured and even died. Moreover, there are so many cement factories coming up there and making constant blasts. These cement factories have been permitted by the Government of Gujarat within the periphery of the forest. They are going on with blasts round the clock. When the Duke of Edinburgh, President of Wildlife Association was taken to Gir forests, he could not see even a single lion. Tnis is the position. The only habitat, as my hon. friend has said, of lions should be protected and whatever illegal activity or improper activity is going on should be stopped by the Forest Department. The hon. Minister, Shrimati Maneka Gandhi, who is taking so much care of animals, may look into the matter. I would request her to visit Gir forests. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Maneka Gandhi also wants to say something.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: I do not know whether Manekaji wants to associate her self with this or whether she is going to give her opinion on this because this does not belong to her portfolio. Madam, I want to associate myself with this.

मैडम, यह बात सही है कि दुनिया में दो ही जगह लायन्स मिलते हैं एक अफ्रीकन ब्राउन लायन और दूसरा गोल्डन लायन इन गौर फारेस्ट । तीसरी जगह लायन का नेचुरल हैबीटाट नहीं है। मुझे भी मौका मिला है गीर के जंगल में जाने का औऱ देखने का । उसी समय से मुझे लग रहा था जिस ढंग से पर्यटकों को ले जाकर दिखाया जाता है वह सही नहीं हैं। लेकिन खैर । अब तो बात इतनी बढ़ गयी है कि मुझे नहीं लगता है कि गीर जंगल अब जंगल रह भी पाएगा पर्यावरण का जिस ढंग से विनाश हो रहा है। आपने खुद अपने आसन से कहा। मुझे लगता है कि पर्यावरण का उल्लघंन करते हुए, कानून को तोड़कर जिस ढंग से वहां डेवलपमेंट के नाम पर कल कारखाने खोलने, ब्लास्टिंग और आने जाने के लिए ट्रक्स के रास्ते खोले जा रहे हैं, यह निश्चित रुप से गीर के जंगल के लिए मौत की घंटी है। मैं यह चाहूंगी कि तत्काल सरकार इसका नोटिस ले और इस तरह की जो कार्यवाही वहांम हो रही है उसको रोके तथा गीर के जंगल को बचाने का हर संभव प्रयास करे।

सभापतिः आप बोलेंगी कि पहले मैं बोल दूं। अच्छा, आप बोल दीजिए। Then, I will give my ruling on it,

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE AND THE MINISTER OF STATC OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): Madam, actually I do not know whether I am allowed to take part in the discussion because unfortunately I am not the Minister for Environment and Forests. But I would like to say two or three things. One is, what the hon. Member has said is completely true. We have a very, very grave situation here. The reason for its grayi^ is that this is the only in the world where lions are found. The second thing is the Asiatic lions cannot be taken into zoos. A lot of people have suggested कबस को ले लो cit breed them and put them back. In no cat family can you take cubs, breed them and then put them back. Therefore, if they finish here, they will be finished for ever; they will be extinct. Now, there are two or

three things which have come up in Gir and for which I have written to the Chief Minister several times. And he, for some reason, is extremely reluctant to undo them. One is the dreadful temple that has come up there. This temple is more of a tourist sight and is creating a lot of problems not because of just the inflow of tourism — the inflow of people, for supposedly seeing this temple — but also because there is a lot of garbage being scattered. A lot of lions are coming out of their habitats to eat the food being thrown there. Deer come out to eat that food and lions follow them. So, it is much easier to kill them. Secondly, Madam, the World Bank has given a lot of money — I think that about a hundred crores have come — for the rehabilitation of Gir. That money has not yet been used in any sensible fashion at all. It has been mainly used for documentation centres and such things whereas it should be used for either removing that temple or for preservation of that forest. The third thing that they have brought in and which is really frightening is the rope-way. And they plan to cut down 20,000 trees within the sanctuary to establish a rope-way so that people can go to the temple by the rope-way. The excuse is ^^ M it 'H fl<11 «n so, why not put it here? It is actually no excuse. It is not rocky. It is not hilly. You don't need a rope-way. To do it, they will have to cut down trees. The Forest Department has objected to it strenuously. But they have been over-ruled by political pressure. There is, in fact, a lot of money being given by the World Bank to take the lions out of Gir and put them into a place in Madhya Pradesh. I received a report on it yesterday. A person by name Mr. Arpan Sharma was commissioned by the Govcrnment to do a report on this: He has given a report saying that there are 16,000 people living in the area where the lions are supposed to be centred. If they are taken out forcibly, they will kill the lions as it happened once before when the Tions were brought to Uttar Pradesh. Since the Environment Ministry has got no money for rehabilitaiton, in my Ministry what we have done is we have made a scheme and we have said that any village that would like to move out of forests like Gir or like the new sanctuary which has been established for lions, namely, in Madhya Pradesh. We are happy to pay, money for the sensible rehabilitation of all villagers who would like to move out, instead of picking them up and throwing them away. Since all of them are tribals, we would like to give them, say, approximately Rs. one lakh per person, with land and vocational training so that they can move out of place, like Rajaji, Gir, this new place , etc. After this long discussion, may I just say one thing, if the Consultative Committee or the Standing Committee on Environment and Forests could actually go to Gujarat, go to Gir, meet the Chief Minister that is the only way, I think perhaps he would back down before it is too late; otherwise, this ropeway will go through, this *Mandir* expansion which is already in the process would go through, with more roads coming in. All the roads should be shut down because all the lions are getting killed while crossing roads at night because trucks are going there. So, instead of that, there should be untarred roads. This is possible to do just digging them up. Perhaps, this is one thing in which this House could contribute a lot.

SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR: I had a talk with the hon. Minister for Environment and Forests. He told me that he has immediately written to the Gujarat Government on learning about this through the Press and through me. But unfortuneately, there has been no meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Forests of which I was a Member last year. I have opted for it again this time. I think a meeting will not be possible. Except this intervention by the hon. Minister and her words will definitely count.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I feel that this matter is very serious. We are all very concerned about protecting all

our temples and other religious places. We should also be as much concerned about our animal habitat and their lives because I, as a Zoologist feel that. I protect not only the rights of human beings, but it extends to all animals, visible and not so visible. I think it is very grave situation. As Manekaji has said, money is available, but there is no will and there are vested interests in it. I also have my information about it and there are vested interests working on it and pressurising. It is a good suggestion that the Standing Committee on Environment and Forests should visit and prevail upon the authorities, specially the Chief Minister that it will be a dead loss not only to the State of Gujarat but to the country and the world because we cannot just pick up the animals and put them into a new place. They get traumatised. This is another point. Even if you try to do that, they get traumatised. In the case of *Cheetah,* they were brought from Africa. They could not breed over here. Even plants get traumatised; even orchids get traumatised. So, animals will get traumatised. So, the best thing is, as suggested, the Committee should visit. This is a direction from the Chair which I hardly ever give.

SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR: Madam, I am grateful that you have associated yourself with it

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I owe it to my own commitment in life. Now, we will take up Appropriation (No. 3) Bill, 1998. Shri Yashwant Sinha.

THE APPROPRIATION (NO. 3) BILL, 1998

THE MINISTER OF HNANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): Madam Deputy Chairman, I beg to move:

> "That the Bill the authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1998-99, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Madam, the Bill provides for withdrawal out of the Consolidbted Fund of India of the amount required to meet the expenditure for the year 19$8-99 charged on the Fund as well as the Grants voted by the Lok Sabha. Gross disbursement of seven lakh four thousand two hundred and twenty two crores and sixty nine lakh rupees are provided in the Bill. After setting of recoveries and receipts taken in reduction of expenditure, the receipts of departmentally-run commercia l undertakings and transactions in the nature of amount of accounting adjustments, the net provisions aggregate to two lakh sixty seven thousand nine hundred and twenty seven crores of rupees. Out of this, seventy two thousand and two crores of rupees are for financing Centre, States and union Territory Plans. The provision for non-Plan expenditure includes forty one thousand two hundred crores of rupees for Defence, seventy two thousand and twenty five crores of rupees for subsidies, seven thousand three hundred and forty two crores for pensions, twenty one thousand and forty six crores of rupees for grants and loans for States and Union Territory Governments and the balance of twenty nine thousand three hundred and twelve crores of rupees are for other non-Plan expenditure including expenditure of the Union Territories without legislatures and grants and loans of foreign governments. The amounts provided in the Bill are inclusive of the sums already authorised in the Appropriation Vote on Account Act. 1998 (No. 5) of 1998. The House has already had a general debate on the budget. I would not, therefore, enumerate the details of the Budget provisions and shall deal with the,points that might be made by the Hon. Members of the House in the oonise of the discussion.

Madam, I move.

The quesiton was proposed.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Madam Deputy Chairperson, the hon.